

Testimony of

**Sheila Gambino**

**Shepaug Valley Educator**

Before the

Education Committee

March 15, 2023

Good afternoon, Senator McCrory, Representative Currey, Senator Berthel, Representative McCarty, and members of the Education Committee.

I testify today in support of House Bill 6884. This bill takes important steps toward addressing the educator shortage in Connecticut, showing educators that theirs is a respected profession, and ensuring that our classrooms and schools can provide the best possible education for our students.

The approval of these bills would greatly impact me, especially in the area of retirement. I have contemplated teaching several times over the past couple of years, and the retirement benefit would keep me teaching for more years. Covid burnt me out as it did many other educators, and I believe that this benefit would be a great incentive to keep us in the school buildings and lending our immense body of experience and our dedication to the profession would be renewed. Over the past year, we have lost more and more prep time and we even have a schedule where we teach every class period during a day with additional duties and lunch. Providing teachers with 30 minutes of prep time that could not be debated would be a great addition to working conditions being improved. I fully support play-based learning and I believe that this is the best way to get our children more engaged.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

